WHICH ROAD SHALL WE TAKE?

FREDERICK B. FISHER

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Which Road Shall We Take?

A Frank Discussion of
METHODISM'S INTERNATIONAL POLITY

By FREDERICK B. FISHER
Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church

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DEDICATED TO

DAVID G. DOWNEY

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY

AND TO

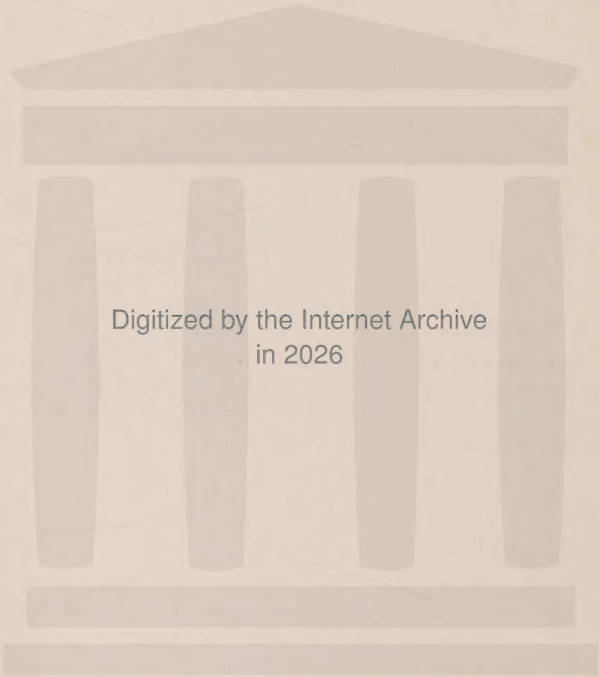
TITUS LOWE

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN MISSIONS

IN THE

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1920

To these men, by the blessing of God and the suffrage of their brethren, it was given to present programs of constructive advance, worthy of modern Methodism and of the times in which we live.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PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to make a constructive contribution to the discussion now taking place with reference to the development of the Methodist Episcopal Church outside of the United States of America.

Central Mission Conferences have been provided for in the Disciplinary law of the church for more than a generation. The Annual Conferences in India, through an Enabling Act of the General Conference, organized the first Central Conference thirty-eight years ago. It has had a successful career and has made definite contributions to the growth of Methodism in Southern Asia. Thirteen sessions have been held, and the fourteenth convenes in Calcutta in December, 1923. Besides the Missionary Bishops in Southern Asia, there have been four General Superintendents who have presided over its sessions. These were Bishops John F. Hurst, W. X. Ninde, Cyrus D.

Foss, and Henry W. Warren. Other fields have from time to time taken advantage of the legislation, with the result that the recent General Conference defined the territories for six Central Conferences, as follows: (1) Europe, including North Africa; (2) Eastern Asia; (3) Southern Asia; (4) Southeastern Asia; (5) South Africa; (6) Latin America.

The recent assignment of additional general superintendents abroad, and the readjustment of the Central Conferences to present-day needs, have brought this subject to the fore.

This enlargement of powers was granted by the General Conference of 1920 in response to a memorial from Southern Asia.[1] From other conservative sources a memorial was presented asking that the powers be limited, but the General Conference by deliberate choice voted nonconcurrence in this, and proceeded with legislation for increased privileges.

During the last year there have appeared

[1] General Conference Journal, 1920, page 600.

two books, diametrically opposed to each other, namely, *The Next Step—A Study in Methodist Polity,* by the Reverend Paul Hutchinson, and *The Methodist Episcopal Church and Its Foreign Missions,* by Bishop Thomas B. Neely. Mr. Hutchinson's book appeared first, and created church-wide interest. Bishop Neely's book combats Mr. Hutchinson's suggestions, and attacks the legality of our foreign organization and growth.

I shall try to demonstrate that our international polity is moderate but progressive, and in strict conformity with the ideals and historic growth of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

If certain personalities are mentioned, it is because they have been referred to in one or the other of the above-mentioned books, or in the church press during recent months. It is impossible to frankly discuss so practical a matter without making references to what has gone before. However, I do not wish any of those personalities, or their friends, to feel that they have been singled

out for criticism. So far as possible the discussion bears directly upon the polity, history, and growth of our church and the mention of books, articles, and personalities is incidental to the discussion.

It is hoped that this book will not be looked upon as an appeal from what is called "the foreign field" to what is called the "home church," but that it may be regarded as a presentation from the angle of the church as a whole.

The volume is purposely written in the first person because of a desire to avoid bookish expressions, and to speak face to face with the church at this hour.

It has been impossible for the author to personally read or revise the proofs because of his distance from the publishers' headquarters. The book was written in India. Thanks are therefore due friends in New York who have read the proofs.

"CHRISTO ET ECCLESIAE"

F. B. F.

Calcutta, India, September, 1923.

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CHAPTER I

THE CROSSROADS

A FEW years ago while on an extended tour through one of the interesting countries of Southern Europe I came to a crossroads. A sign at the corner, on being translated into English, said, "Short Cut to the Law Court." Thinking that the Law Court would probably be in the center of a village, and being always interested in human life, I thought I would take the short cut with the hope of arriving at one of those alluring European market places with its fascinating hum of human voices and its gay, highly colored costumes. Therefore I turned into this narrow lane. I had taken but a few steps when a sharp pain pierced my foot and I stooped down to pluck from the side of my shoe a short, thick thorn. On looking about I discovered that the lane was lined on either side with high thorny hedges. Following this experience I walked very cautiously for two

or three furlongs and came to an open square paved with cobblestones and surrounded with low gray stone buildings.

In one corner of the square two men were holding excited conversation, which soon developed into a bitter quarrel. In the center two men were gesticulating in anger. On the veranda of the Law Court was a crowd of waiting witnesses, some of them playing cards, others throwing dice, while others were either languidly sitting or conversing with their fellows. Suddenly I heard the sound of heavy boots and turned to see a prisoner dragged toward the Court by two stalwart policemen. The whole sight sickened me. I sought a way of escape, and happily saw a sign at a corner of a street, which, being translated into English, read, "The Road to the Mountain." With a leap of the heart I entered this street and tried to forget the commonplace fights which surrounded the temple of legality. Proceeding along this street I came into one of those white European roadways, found myself joined by other pedestrians, and after a few

hours came to the hill top, where there was a magnificent view of the valley with its winding river, its waving trees, and abundant scent of flowers.

What a contrast! On that day I reached a decision to always try to avoid the thorn-scattered alley that leads to mere legality and to direct my path toward the mountain of vision.

It is certain that the greater service of the Methodist Episcopal Church will lie along the road of vision rather than along the alley of legal interpretations and requirements. At this point Bishop Neely's book is extremely disappointing. One of the greatest surprises of my twenty years in the Methodist ministry has been to note the seeming favor with which this book has been received. During the reading I had mingled feelings of amusement, disappointment, and sadness. It fell far below what I anticipated, through my knowledge of the author, and because of the title of the book. There is not even a subtitle to indicate the legal, technical, and critical nature of the contents of the book.

It puts into the minds of members of other denominations certain legal and technical criticisms of our work, rather than giving them a fair, even though critical, view of our progress throughout the world. The book is particularly out of place in the mission fields, because the whole burden of the book is that the Methodist Church is purely an American institution, and that the very students who study the book should be severed from organic connection with the church and cast adrift as an independent national group.

The time-worn adage, "Old men for counsel and young men for war," is reversed. One author in his eighty-second year rushes into war in true Don Quixote fashion, nicking his sword unnecessarily. Mr. Hutchinson prophetically presents the significance of the present situation. Hence we shall do well in this case to take counsel of youth. I find myself at variance with the bishop's whole attitude and position, while I am in substantial agreement with Mr. Hutchinson's presentation.

The argument of the former is based upon the official name or title of the denomination and the alleged intention of our forefathers. But many practical men might ask, "What's in a name?" Strictly speaking, Philadelphia means the "city of brotherly love," but have we not all seen the smoke of ecclesiastical combat rising with frequent regularity from that quarter? Indianapolis is filled with every other people except Indians; a solitary Indian walking down its streets will attract eager attention. Having seen *Old* York, who would consider *New* York true to its namesake? Take our church name and analyze it. "Methodist" was originally given to us in derision, but we have changed the content of that opprobrium and have made it our proud and serious title. "Episcopal," in the dictionary of certain groups, is descriptive only of those churches who hold to the historic episcopate and to apostolic succession. And "church" is a name which a certain ecclesiastical body refuses to apply to us, claiming that we are a sect only. But in spite of all this we have put our own high

content into that lovely name, and have endued it with spiritual implications which transcend its technical letters. Looking out upon other ecclesiastical names, we find that they have expanded beyond original limitations. Is not the "Roman Catholic" Church a contradiction in terms if its name is truly descriptive? How could a church be confined to one city and yet be universal? The "Church of England" did not change its name each time the nation made political changes. It followed the flag, and has pressed out into other parts of the world, without successively changing its name to the Church of Great Britain, Ireland, Scotland, Wales; nor to the Church of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and of the world. And, similarly, you may find the Dutch Reformed, German Lutheran, American and English Baptist, American and Scottish Presbyterian, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, scattered throughout the earth. Names denominate individuals and organizations, but do not dominate them. They are usually given us

by our parents, who are not expected to see the end from the beginning.

The conclusions of the book cannot be proven by the Constitution of the church nor by the plain facts of Methodist history. The author admits that he was compelled to go abroad when the General Conference assigned him a foreign residence, even though he regarded their action as illegal. Why should one obey the voice of an illegal General Conference? A resistance for conscience' sake might be more in line with proper procedure. As a matter of fact, the General Conference is the final authority in such matters, and according to paragraph 42, article 3 of the *Discipline* all "questions of law shall be decided by the General Conference." To argue that the General Conference has committed illegal acts in assigning general superintendents to residence abroad is a reflection both upon the General Conference and upon the officers who accepted such appointment. To admit such a premise would be to stamp all the work which seventeen bishops have done this

quadrennium as outlawry, and likewise to mark with illegitimacy the life-work of Christian servants like Bishops Bashford and Lewis. It cannot be proven either from law or history that the appointment of general superintendents to an area surrounding New York is any more legal than the appointment to Shanghai. They both stand exactly upon the same footing.

Another disappointing thing about the volume is that there are no higher and challenging missionary motives or policies suggested. On the other hand, Mr. Hutchinson's little volume does have the sound of a living voice pointing to a New Day. It is far better to have the subject approached from the standpoint of expensive life than from the standpoint of legal restrictions. The one anchors our ship in the Harbor of Yesterday, while the other launches it on the open sea. And we need not fear the divine Captain nor the Christian crew.

I do not agree with Mr. Hutchinson in the opening paragraph of his book where he indicates that the action taken by the Gen-

eral Conference in 1920 was a blind progression toward radical alteration in our form of church administration. I believe the General Conference acted with its eyes open, and that the policy which it adopted was simply an expression of our natural growth, and was the normal step to be taken. To accept Bishop Neely's contention is to admit that we have been deliberate lawbreakers, while to accept Mr. Hutchinson's explanation is to confess that we have been ignorant drifters and stumblers. By those who believe in the providential character of our missionary development neither position can be accepted.

There is only one important consideration before us in this much debated matter, namely, How shall we advance rightly and after the manner of God's will? We do not wish to have our development stopped by legal restrictions nor do we want it unduly accelerated by impracticable dreams. The best use to which the church's legal minds can be put is to the drafting of constructive and detailed suggestions showing

how to approach the adjustment of the Constitution, if adjustment is required, and how to change the legislation, if change is necessary, to the new world situation which now confronts us, rather than simply to try to prove that every step we have taken is contrary to law. It is not encouraging to our faith to be told that the fields of victory into which God has led us have been secured by false and insecure methods.

There are two alternatives before us. They are: (1) A world federation made up of geographical Central Conferences, with vital and voting connections with the General Conference; or (2) A church split and separated into a series of national units, not officially related the one to the other, and constantly developing a national consciousness which in the end nullifies true Christian principles.

These are the two roads before us. Which shall we take? Shall it be Retrospect or Prospect, Retrograde or Upgrade, Contraction or Expansion, Selfish Growth or World Service? The succeeding chapters

attempt to show that there is nothing in our Constitution, polity, or history which makes it impossible for us to develop this world-wide, interrelated, Christian organization of Methodist brotherhood.

CHAPTER II

SIGN POSTS IN THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

A careful study of the *Discipline* of the Methodist Episcopal Church, edition of 1920, reveals a very interesting series of facts, and these facts absolutely controvert the recent legalistic claims that the Methodist Episcopal Church is, has been, and must be a Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America only. It is the book of *Discipline* which finds its way into the hands of every ordained minister in the various countries of the world. It is the volume which the bishops interpret in the Annual Conferences, and which the Quarterly Conferences use as their guide. It is looked upon by the church, both in America and elsewhere, as the final authority in doctrine and government. It has been translated into the various major languages of the

world, and must therefore be taken as indicating the orderly processes by which we have become the church which we are to-day.

Eighty years ago Robert Emory published an interesting volume, *History of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*[1] The Preface to this old book indicates that the growing ministry of the church must of necessity depend upon the *Discipline,* as amended from time to time, for legal guidance, inasmuch as the General Conference *Journals* are not often available, and also because of the power inherent in each General Conference to make progressive changes in our laws and forms. In this connection he says: "There is internal evidence that the present *Discipline* was not all composed at one time. At what period, then, were its several parts introduced, and what modifications have they undergone? These are points not only of curious inquiry, but essential often to right interpretation. . . . In our civil governments the statutes

[1] Published by G. Lane and P. P. Sandford, New York, 1844.

are scattered through the several volumes of laws, which have been published from time to time, and therefore these are all preserved. But, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, the *Discipline,* as revised at each General Conference, being in itself complete, supplants all that had gone before it, and the previous editions are cast aside as of no further use. Thus it has continued, until now nearly sixty years have elapsed since the organization of the church, and the *Discipline* has undergone about twenty distinct revisions."

Certainly, this would indicate that our church is in no sense static. It likewise points clearly to the fact that the Book of *Discipline* as edited by each succeeding General Conference has always been taken as the authority in matters of polity and procedure. Mr. Emory continues: "Where then shall the student go to find these successive editions? If he resort to the libraries of the oldest preachers, they are not there:—to the library of The Book Concern, they are not there; to the ar-

chives of the General Conference, still they are not to be found. Despairing of success in this pursuit, he may perhaps examine the *Journals* of the General Conference (though, from the nature of the case, this is a privilege which few can enjoy). But here he will find that all prior to 1800 are missing; and that those subsequent to that date convey no accurate information as to the changes in the *Discipline;* because, in the alterations, references are made to chapter, section, question, page, etc., which cannot be understood without having a copy of the then *Discipline* in hand; and because, moreover, at each General Conference the subsequent publication of the *Discipline* is intrusted to a committee, invested with powers (often largely discretionary) as to the selection, arrangement, and wording of the several parts; and no report of their proceedings is entered upon the journal."[2]

It is therefore right that in 1923, when the student wishes to know the spirit, purpose, and law of the Methodist Episcopal Church,

[2] Page 4.

he must have recourse to the current *Discipline,* as authorized by the last General Conference and edited by its official committee.

In the Episcopal Address special attention is called to the peculiar Constitution and administrative rules of our church and to our providential growth. This Address is signed by all the bishops. Quotations from this Address are illuminating. "Evidently God's blessing has been with us, and we have seen an extraordinary work extending throughout all the United States and Territories and throughout the British possessions in North America; also the planting of successful Missions in South America and Mexico. The Methodist Episcopal Church, *in its organic form* and spiritual power, has been established in Africa, Asia, and Europe, where God has given to it great prosperity."[1] It goes on further to state that "during the period in which this work has been extending, the church has *revised its legislation* to meet *the demands created*

[1] *Discipline,* 1920, pp. 3, 4.

by its own activities and by the *conditions of the different peoples* among whom it strives to build up the Kingdom of God."[2] This does not imply that the real Methodist Episcopal Church must be located in the United States of America only, and that the membership outside this territory is in different and minor relationship. It has the same *organic form* and the same vital *spiritual power,* regardless of geographical location.

The Historical Statement, which has remained in the *Discipline* through a number of quadrenniums, gives no indication whatever that the Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in 1784, was intended to confine itself strictly to the then thirteen colonies of the United States of America. It merely indicates that it was the origin of the first church with an episcopal form of government to attain an independent existence in the new republic.

Manifestly, if the membership abroad does not have the same rights and privileges enjoyed by the American membership, the

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 4. Italics ours.

bishops and the editors should have made it perfectly plain in these two statements that the provisions of the *Discipline* should not be enjoyed in their entirety by the new members recruited through missionary efforts. It would be both unfair and unwise to permit the *Discipline* to deceive them in arousing expectations which were illegal and could not be realized.

The Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church is very definitely stated in the preamble to consist of only three divisions: first, the Articles of Religion; second, the General Rules; third, the Articles of Organization and Government. Those who have committed to memory the twenty-five Articles of Religion and those who are familiar with the history and contents of these Articles (which every Methodist ought to be) will recall that there is only one mention of the United States of America. In Article XXIII the American form of government is expounded and supported, but there is a very interesting and illuminating footnote to this Article which has remained in succes-

sive editions of the *Discipline.* I will quote this footnote for the sake of clarity:

"As far as it respects civil affairs we believe it the duty of Christians, and especially of all Christian ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be: and therefore it is expected that all our preachers and people, who may be under the British or any other government, will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects."[3]

Evidently, it is expected that we shall continue to have regular work outside the territory of the United States. In fact, in quite early days we had organized work in Canada, New Foundland, Nova Scotia, and the West Indies. These sections were all under the British flag, but it is very significant that those four important words are inserted—*"or any other government."* This note has been used to very great advantage in different countries, such as Japan, India,

[3] *Discipline,* 1920, p. 33.

and other Asiatic and European nations during the days of war and agitation. It has never been supposed that all the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church would be citizens of, nor subject to, the political sway of the United States of America.

It is passing strange that Bishop Neely quoted the Twenty-third Article of Religion as proving that the church recognized its strict allegiance to the American republic, but he made no reference whatever to the official Disciplinary footnote with reference to loyalty to other nations when citizens or residents thereof. This could not have been an oversight because the note occupies so prominent a position in the *Discipline* and has been of such significance in our history. To claim that this Article has remained the same through all the years and not even mention the footnote is strange indeed.

Examining the General Rules, which form division number four of the Constitution, one does not find even the suggestion of the thought that these General Rules apply to America only. As a matter of fact,

the only mention of the territory is in paragraph twenty-seven, where it speaks of the rise of the united societies first in Europe and then in America. In describing what such a society is there is no geographical tinge. It simply states that a Methodist society is *"a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love that they may help each other to work out their salvation."* This sort of society is potent and helpful in every country and every clime regardless of race or political condition.

In the third division of the Constitution, dealing with the Articles of Organization and Government, there is no suggestion that pastoral charges can only be organized in the United States, and there is no inhibition against the organization of Quarterly Conferences in any country in the world. The Annual Conference is described without any reference to territorial limitation; and in the thoroughgoing chapter on "The General

Conference" there is nothing which suggests that the church is in any way limited to one country or one government.

The only mention of the United States is in the provision that the General Conference may meet at any place in the United States of America, determined upon by the preceding General Conference or its regularly appointed commission, and this was inserted not so much with the thought of forever limiting it to the United States, as to lift it out of the one city of Baltimore, with the thought that it might legally and profitably meet in other centers and sections as well. The day may come in the development of our great church when this Article in the Constitution will be amended so that the General Conference may meet in Europe or Asia or any other section of the world to which our church may elect to go. It would be an inspiring and challenging event to let the General Conference meet some day in Tokyo or Calcutta. Think of the educational value of such a move. Hundreds of delegates and visitors would go back to their

respective homes fired with a new enthusiasm, stirred with a new missionary passion, and instructed in the ways of other nations. It would greatly help to break down the prejudices, racial and national, which have been in evidence in the past. I am not particularly pressing for an immediate attempt to amend the Constitution so as to make this possible, but I suggest it as a vision of what might some day be a blessing to the world-wide kingdom of God.

Coming to that section of the *Discipline* which deals with legislation and which has to do with church membership, worship, and the organization of the various Conferences, General, Annual, Lay, Central, Mission, District, and Quarterly, there is not the slightest indication that the membership of the organized church shall be confined to one nationality. As a matter of fact, hundreds and thousands of members have been regularly and constantly received into the Methodist Episcopal Church in all sections of the world by the use of the ritual provided in the *Discipline,* and their status is exactly

the same as that of any member residing in any State in America.

Those important paragraphs which have to do with the qualifications of preachers are applicable to every nationality. Never in all my ministry have I had greater liberty, or a greater consciousness of the leadership of the Holy Spirit, than when preaching in Asiatic Annual Conferences on these remarkable paragraphs on ministerial conduct and ideals. Ministers have been received into Annual Conferences on trial, and finally into full connection, in China, Malaysia, India, Africa, and Europe in exactly the same way as is done in the Annual Conferences in America. The same ritual and ordination service is used, the same episcopal presidency is provided, the same assignments to work are made. Who shall say that only ministers received in America are *bona fide* preachers of the gospel under the direction of our church, and that these thousands of ministers received in all sincerity throughout the world are either outlaws or outcastes? They have the same rights of trial and they

have the same right to elect their delegates, in proportion to their membership, to the General Conference. Not unless the Constitution of the church is changed by drastic amendment can these lay members or ministers be disfranchised or deprived of their rights. They are members in good and full standing. They represent rich fruit which God has given us through the years. If you turn to the course of study, your eyes will open in wonder as you see the various languages in which the courses of study have been printed for the training of our ministers. The major languages of the world are represented.

In looking at the Disciplinary provisions for the organization of the connectional boards of the church one is struck by the absence of references to geographical boundaries. In such a legal and restrictive charter as that provided for the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church with headquarters at Cincinnati, the *Discipline* fails to state that it is the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. The gen-

eral name alone is mentioned without the territorial restriction.

In the paragraphs dealing with local preachers, exhorters, and deaconesses there is no suggestion that these varied Christian activities are open only to Americans within American territory. The forms are applicable anywhere in the world.

In such an important item as the Deeds for Church Property one finds that the property is to be registered according to the laws of the State or territory within which the property is located. And it is significant that in paragraph 346, the words "or country" are used in contradistinction to American States and territories, thus definitely signifying the expectation that property will be held and registered in the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church in other countries than the United States, and making legal provision therefor. Thus official provision is made for the holding of property by local constituencies anywhere in the world. In the official title suggested for deeds it simply states the "Methodist

Episcopal Church," without other restrictions as to name or territory.

The Annual Conferences in all countries have their boundaries listed in the book of *Discipline* along with the various American Conferences, and in the outline of General Conference Districts, all Conferences and Mission Conferences are listed together in groups.

One may go through the official *Discipline* from beginning to end without being impressed that the Methodist Episcopal Church is exclusively an American church. In fact, the impression is given in every chapter that the Methodist Episcopal Church, having originated in the United States of America, has become world-wide in its organization, membership, and interests.

With reference to the contention that it is illegal to assign general superintendents to residence abroad, and that the only legal provision for the administration of work on the mission field is the missionary episcopacy, I would like to raise a question which

has evidently been overlooked in the entire discussion. In paragraph 46, section 3, containing the Restrictive Rules, making it impossible for the General Conference to do away with episcopacy or to destroy the plan of itinerant general superintendency, there is the following provision: It "may elect a missionary bishop or superintendent for any of our foreign missions, limiting his episcopal jurisdiction to the same respectively." It is not, therefore, a compulsory legislation requiring, or even suggesting, that foreign-mission territories *must* be administered by missionary bishops, but simply that, since the Restrictive Rule requires that the general superintendents travel at large throughout the connection, the General Conference *may* relieve them of the necessity and the strain of world-wide travel, by electing missionary bishops, if it so desires, to administer the work in certain fields. But to these missionary bishops the Restrictive Rule does not apply. They are to administer only in the field for which they are elected.

It is, therefore, not by any means a necessity but an expedient to be used when desired. The General Conference of 1920 decided that it was not then desirable to take advantage of this liberty. Therefore, in regular order, it proceeded separately to elect the then missionary bishops to the general superintendency, and then to elect only general superintendents, assigning the residences, both in America and elsewhere, according to the judgment of the delegates. If, of course, at any time a future General Conference should wish to avail itself of this expedient, it will have a perfect right to elect such missionary bishops as it may deem wise, and thereby once again relieve the general superintendents from the necessity of annual travel throughout the entire world-wide connection. It should be clearly noted, however, that an expedient is altogether a different thing from a necessitous rule.

It would be interesting to raise another question in passing. Paragraph 78 requires that a *bishop* shall preside in the Annual Conference. This means presumably a

general superintendent, because the *Discipline* elsewhere explicitly explains that a missionary bishop is not, and must not be regarded as, a general superintendent. Paragraph 78 further provides that in case no bishop is present at an Annual Conference, the Conference shall elect, by ballot without debate, a president from among its elders. Can, therefore, a missionary bishop preside at an Annual Conference? It is stated that a bishop must preside, and makes no provision for that bishop to appoint a missionary bishop to supply his place in case of absence. Other provisions are made. In paragraph 96 it is required that a bishop, presumably a general superintendent, shall preside at a Mission Conference, and in case no bishop is present, the superintendent will preside. In the technical meaning of Methodist phraseology a "Mission" is neither a Mission Conference nor an Annual Conference. It has exactly the same Disciplinary status as a District Conference. This is provided for in paragraph 421, section 2. Section 1 in this paragraph speaks of a "Mis-

sion" as being established in a foreign country outside of an Annual Conference. It may, therefore, be worth while to raise the technical question as to whether a missionary bishop, strictly speaking, was intended to be merely the superintendent of a "Mission" and not for presidency at Annual and Mission Conferences. If this should be true, then there would be little place for a missionary bishop in most of our mission fields, because they are organized into Annual and Mission Conferences. This point is not a major consideration, but is merely presented in passing, so as to raise the inquiry as to whether missionary bishops have been acting illegally in presiding over Annual and Mission Conferences, and whether the General Conferences were guilty of illegal action in assigning missionary bishops to general episcopal supervision for other forms of organization than "Missions." That a "Mission" is a distinct entity altogether different from Annual or Mission Conferences is made evident in paragraph 421, section 3, in the provision that a Mission may, by an Enabling

Act, be allowed to organize itself, under certain restrictions, into a Mission Conference or an Annual Conference.

By going back to certain of the technical actions of the early General Conferences it would be possible for a legal mind to find primitive enactments which might seem to indicate that the General Conferences during the last fifty years have provided a much more expansive and liberal ecclesiastical organization than was at first intended. But it must be borne in mind that each succeeding General Conference has had exactly the same authority to enact new policies, and to expand old provisions, and to interpret the law, as had the Christmas Conference in 1784 to perfect an organization, and as had the first delegated General Conference to enact provisions at that date. We are dealing not with a cast-iron, mechanical structure, but with a living organism which, like every other living thing, keeps constantly adapting and enlarging its life and power. One of the most remarkable ecclesiastical phenomena in church history is the way in

which the Methodist Episcopal Church has remained true to its early doctrines and polity, and has yet been able to adjust itself to the new generations as they have come and gone. This is a proof of its living vitality.

CHAPTER III

MILE POSTS IN OUR HISTORY

It is readily admitted that by quotations from the *Journals* of 1784, 1796, 1818, 1848, or even as late of 1864, it is possible to show documents indicating that the official name of the church was "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." But even though it could be absolutely proven that the church consciously began as an organization limiting itself to the United States of America, the history of the denomination shows that by deliberate choice the church has enlarged its borders and lived a life of constant expansion.

The Christmas Conference in 1784 had no conception of the coming American expansion westward, but Francis Asbury's whole life was spent, not only in conserving the interests of the church as already established along the Atlantic seaboard, but in

extending our borders ever westward into the wilderness. Bishop McKendree, his itinerant associate, seconded him in this westward movement. In many places these noble itinerant bishops and itinerant preachers preceded the government itself into the wilderness, preaching in isolated cabins and pioneer camps. And wherever they went they established societies and organized regular circuits and Conferences. Asbury's *Journal,* Peter Cartwright's autobiography, and any history of Methodism will show the inspiring record of this early expansion. They had not the slightest idea of confining the church to the boundaries already fixed.

The whole argument based on the childhood days of the church is beside the point. The parent is the authority for the child, but not for the man. There is respect and love between the parent and the adult son or daughter, but not the sense of obedience or authority on either side. Our church has grown with almost unprecedented rapidity throughout the world. The new Conferences and members are now coequals in au-

thority, in proportion to their strength and representation in the General Conference.

Methods change. In the *Journals* of the early Conferences one notices that the question-and-answer style of parliamentary procedure was used. In this manner the business was conducted and the minutes kept. But now our General Conference has grown to larger proportions, and is conducted in modern parliamentary fashion. Even Bishop Neely's book on *Parliamentary Practice* does not consider it necessary, in these modern days, to deal with the question-and-answer method. So in other things, such as boards, societies, national and international organization, there has been considerable development. In discussing the conditions which confront us to-day our safety is not in returning to the conditions of childhood. We are full grown and must look out upon the world through experienced eyes.

Ibsen said, "That man is right who stands closest to the future." To try to view the world to-day, and our Christian relation to

it, in terms of the vision, knowledge, or experience of those great founders of our church who lived and wrought a hundred and fifty years ago, would be utterly foolish. The world has had its most marvelous growth in many ways since then. Some one has reminded us that in 1773 there was no United States; and about one half of what is now the United States belonged to Spain, and the other half to England. New York city had less than twenty-five thousand inhabitants, and Boston and Philadelphia had less than twenty thousand each. Chicago and San Francisco and Los Angeles were not in existence. There was no Germany, and France was a monarchy. The interior of Africa was absolutely unknown to the civilized world, and Japan was scarcely more than a myth to European scholars. Within a century there have come the locomotive, the steamer, the telegraph, the camera, the telephone, the wireless, the dirigible, the aeroplane, the radio, the automobile, steel-framed buildings, the gramophone, the typewriter, and a thousand other mechanical in-

ventions which have changed the modes of human life. Points of contact can be established now with China, or Africa, in less time than Francis Asbury could travel his smallest Methodist circuit a hundred and fifty years ago. With the modern appliances of travel and communication, and the wealth of the church, an international General Conference can be convened with relatively as little toil and inconvenience as was the Christmas Conference of 1784.

"The world advances and, in time, outgrows
The laws which in our fathers' days were best."

It is entirely misleading to quote from the General Conference of 1828 the action with reference to the separation of the Canadian Conference as a proof of the contention that the Methodist Episcopal Church must be forever confined to the territory of the government of the United States of America. They did not deny the right of citizens of another government to be members of the church. The Canadian section *desired* separation, and in response to this demand the

General Conference sanctioned the separation. In order fully to explain the manner in which this came about it would be necessary to take into account the history of the times. The United States of America had become an independent government, as the result of a war with Great Britain, and during those days there was always misunderstanding between the two peoples. The War of 1812 accentuated the sense of separateness. The Canadian Methodists were citizens of the British kingdom, therefore when the demand for separation became particularly strong it was only natural that the General Conference took the action it did, namely:

"Whereas the Canadian Annual Conference, situated in the province of Upper Canada, under a foreign government, have, in their memorial, presented to this Conference the difficulties under which they labor in consequence of their union with a foreign ecclesiastical government, and setting forth their desire to be set off as a separate church establishment; and whereas, this General

Conference disclaim all right to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction under such circumstances, except by mutual agreement,"[1] etc.

The three points to be stressed in this case are: first, the foreign Conference demanded separation; second, peculiar circumstances surrounded this particular case; and third, the General Conference simply refused to *force* ecclesiastical jurisdiction upon peoples of another government *except by mutual agreement.*

This interpretation presents a totally different viewpoint from that which would attempt to take that circumstance as an absolute proof that the Methodist Episcopal Church was, and must forever remain, a body limited to the territory of the United States of America. The church in India, in China, in Europe, in Africa, in South America has not asked nor demanded separation. It has not come to the place where it even hints that its connection with this international (and American) institution is

[1] Neely, *The Methodist Episcopal Church and Its Foreign Missions*, p. 76.

embarrassing. It is, therefore, gratuitous to offer the suggestion that they really cannot legally belong to our denomination, and to quote a particular circumstance, such as the Canadian, in proof of the contention.

As a matter of fact, certain of the delegates who were present at the General Conference which sanctioned the Canadian separation were compelled to defend their action. Their defense was that the Conference regarded the compact between the mother church and the brethren in Canada as of a voluntary character. The time having arrived *"when they were no longer willing to receive or accept of our labors and superintendence,"* they requested the withdrawal of American cooperation and affiliation, and the General Conference acceded to this demand. The case would have been altogether different had the initiative been taken by the United States citizens themselves, and had they demanded that the Canadian citizens be expelled from the church.

It was the temper engendered by war which separated the American societies from

Mr. Wesley's United Society in Great Britain. The growth of independence, intensified by another war, separated the church in Canada. Controversial issues caused the Southern Conferences to dissociate themselves from their brethren. In each case it was by the desire of the separatists. And Japan, though unattended by international strife, desired and demanded independence. In none of these cases were large units summarily dismissed because they were not considered lawful members of the church. It was not because they were *foreigners* in one case that they were peacefully released, nor because they were *Americans* in another case that they were opposed. Each development was the outgrowth of a particular set of circumstances, and cannot be urged as precedents which would justify establishing territorial limitations to-day.

In this connection the quotation from the General Conference of 1848 with reference to the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, can be made very misleading. That Conference was reconsider-

ing the action of 1844, and after a strenuous debate was led to pronounce upon the constitutionality of certain actions of its predecessor. But did the General Conference of 1848 have more authority *per se* than the one of 1844? Each was supreme in its own hour. In 1848 it was declared, "Nor has the said General Conference, or any individual, or any number of individuals, any right, constitutionally or otherwise, to extend official sanction to any act tending directly or indirectly to the dismemberment of the church."[2] The significant thing in this action is not the circumstance that the new church happened to be within the territory of the United States of America, and therefore the General Conference reversed the action of its predecessor, but the disaffected Conferences had withdrawn and set up a totally new and independent church. Therefore the Methodist Episcopal Church contended its right to retain all members, even in the territory claimed by the new church, who had not definitely withdrawn and identified them-

[2] General Conference *Journal*, 1848, p. 164.

selves with the new organization. For this reason the Methodist Episcopal Church was not willing to confine its activities to a section of the United States. Its itinerant preachers claimed the right to serve universally so far as territory was concerned. The autobiography of Peter Cartwright is particularly illuminating at this point, because he was one of the vigorous champions of this policy.

A General Conference to-day might be constrained to take the same attitude if a group of Conferences in any section of the United States, or in the Philippines, or China, or India, or Europe, should hold a separate General Conference and organize themselves into an independent church. It is conceivable that there might be a large body of Filipinos, Chinese, Indians, or Europeans who would wish to retain their membership in the old church. And we might feel compelled to continue the shepherding of these flocks, because there is no way by which their membership in the church can be dissolved except by voluntary with-

drawal or by a trial for violation of the church law.

In this connection it might occur to many that the contention of the above-mentioned General Conference is applicable to-day: *"nor has the General Conference, or any individual, or any number of individuals, any right, constitutionally or otherwise, to extend official sanction to any act tending directly or indirectly to the dismemberment of the church."* This would equally apply to any individual who now seeks to disfranchise or disown *bona fide* members of our church who happen to be citizens of other countries, but who prize their spiritual and organic relationship to this great church.

We need the vision which these fellow members can impart, and they need our counsel and cooperation. We are brothers by spiritual birth and the sense of that brotherhood must not be lost.

The utter length to which this claim to narrow, national exclusiveness and power can be carried, is found in words like these: "And so, if it takes on more mission fields

abroad, *or loses all its foreign Missions,* the church remains the same Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."[3] God pity the church in the United States of America under such circumstances. Any such dismemberment of our world-wide organization and spiritual brotherhood would set the Church of Jesus Christ back by a hundred years. It would turn the life of American Methodism inward. Her growth would be selfish. The canker would gnaw at her very heart. She would become full of national, racial, and ecclesiastical pride, and would die from overfeeding and self-indulgence. Take away the missionary passion and sacrifice that burns to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation within the reach of our resources, and to gather them into fellowship with us, and you have cut the nerve of spiritual growth and blessing.

There is no need of setting up any sort of goblin to excite our fears with regard to the

[3] Neely, *The Methodist Episcopal Church and Its Foreign Missions,* pp. 183-184.

possibility of the church abroad becoming so powerful that it will suddenly control the very destinies of the American Conferences. The implication that the foreign membership must either forever be governed by a church in the United States of America, or that the church in America must be governed by the foreign Conferences, is an attempt to force one of two alternatives when neither of them is in danger of being realized. In a church made up of world-wide constituencies, with local Quarterly Conferences, Annual Conferences, and regional Central Conferences, there is no reason why each national section cannot develop along the line of its own characteristics and genius. Neither the one church nor the other need rule. They will all rule, side by side, in true Christian spirit. The very size, homogeneous character, economic strength, traditions, and power of the American constituency are a guarantee against foreign domination. How much easier it would be to have a unity of purpose among the millions in the American membership than to bring about an ab-

solute solidarity among Europe, India, China, and Africa!

Suppose that the day should come when there would be as many millions of members in India as there are in America. Will the American section be in any greater danger of absorption or domination by the Indian section, than if such a huge membership should grow in India and be an independent church? Each independent church would feel the call of the "great commission" to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. The spiritual power in the independent Indian church might, two or three centuries hence, be so dynamic as to cause it to send missionaries throughout the whole world. Suppose the independent Indian Methodist Church should feel that its grasp of the Spirit of Christ was so much greater than the American Methodist Church, that it would send hundreds and thousands of Indian missionaries into America. There would be, under those circumstances, a far greater opportunity to influence certain of the American constituencies

and to undermine the power of the localized church than were American Methodists and Indian Methodists conscious of Christian solidarity, both trusting each other and co-operating in world-wide endeavor. It need not be argued that the possibility of such missionary development on the part of India is a wild assertion, because it should be borne in mind that Indian Mohammedanism has captured the island empires in the Malaysian Archipelago. Practically a hundred per cent of the population of Java is Mohammedan of the Indian type. It must also be remembered that Buddhism arose in India and, through Indian missionaries, spread itself through Burma, Siam, China, and Japan. Why not keep the Indian, the African, the Chinese, and the European Methodists within our one great church, so that all the fine, high qualities that will be developed by each may be shared by all?

To say that we must either be exclusively a national American church, or become a church exactly like Rome, is making a statement which does not take into account any

of the facts in the situation, but which merely appeals to certain Protestant convictions against the Roman organization. I speak frankly when I say that I would far rather be a member of the Roman Catholic Church, in spite of all its autocratic assumption of power, than to be a member of a little, sectional church, which is not big enough to take into its vision and membership representatives of any other races or nations. In spite of all the errors of Romanism it must be said that it is powerful in its influence politically, socially, and religiously, because it is so universal. But it is not necessary for me to be a member of the Roman Church in order to belong to a catholic body. My own Methodist Church is catholic. Our traditions, our polity, our ideals, our history have all helped to make us so. We do not have a Pope, nor do we need to elect one, in order to be an organization of world-wide extent. I shall endeavor to show in the fifth chapter that our Methodist polity provides every facility for democratic, international, organic union, and for national independence and growth.

It is not an imperial church for which I plead. God forbid. I am no disciple of imperialism in any form. What we must seek is an organic union of self-respecting constituencies in all parts of the world and among all races. Our missionaries are not sent out for Christian conquest, they are not to go to the tropics or the Orient for the purpose of adding so many provinces to the territory of an ambitious church with imperial aspirations. They are sent to carry the truth of Christ and the story of his redemption to the ends of the earth, and they are to go in the spirit of service, brotherhood, and good will.

But a part of the redemptive purpose of Christ is to gather the Christians of all the world into communion and fellowship in him. An isolated individual Christian, not in communion with other Christians, is a contradiction in terms; an isolated local church is an anomaly; an isolated national church, confined to one nation and not in communion with other Christians, is a curse.

We are, whether we wish it or not, an in-

ternational church, regularly and legally established in the various countries of the world. What we have on our hands is not a legal or theoretical judgment as to what the early fathers intended us to be, but the character which through a long series of years, and by conscious choice, we have developed. We must therefore take ourselves as we are.

CHAPTER IV

THE DAMASCUS ROAD

THE Christian missionary program was foreshadowed in Christ's great commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. But it did not take on dynamic power until Saul was set on fire by the vision on the Damascus road. He did not set out along that road with the idea of doing Christian missionary work, but on the way a "light from heaven shined round about." It was not the road to Macedonia, nor to Antioch, nor to Rome, but it was the unexpected road to the power which made all these other highways glorious with service and redemption. Many a time an individual has started down some lane or street that was intended to be the way to a selfish goal, and has been halted by a "voice from heaven" saying, "Go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do." And many

a nation, and even a church, has fenced itself around with certain national or denominational limitations. But in the midst of its journey toward power it has found it "hard to kick against the pricks," and has "trembled with astonishment," saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Sometimes it is as sinful to live a little life, or to seek a selfish goal, as it is to "breathe out threatenings." God has a way of locating individuals and organizations which have in them inherent power for heroic service, and lifting them out of themselves into new life-channels. Blessed is that man, or church, or nation, whether consciously or innocently walking down the Damascus road, which hears God's voice, and experiences a change, and follows the vision. To him who is "not disobedient unto the heavenly vision," God says, "Thou art 'a chosen vessel unto me, *to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show' you 'how great things' you 'must suffer for my name's sake.'* "[1]

[1] Acts 9. 15-16.

Paul's Damascus vision never faded. Trial and persecution, success and pride, all failed to turn him aside. He built the first great connectional Christian church of all history. And he built it on the twofold Christian ideal of universal union in Christ, with national liberty in non-essentials. This foundation has proved lasting.

The minutes of the first international General Conference, or missionary convention, are found in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Paul and his fellow missionaries had gone back to the church council at Jerusalem to demand certain rights for the new foreign churches. The fact that he personally referred it to the apostles at Jerusalem is proof that with all his independence he regarded the Christian Church as connectional everywhere. Certain legalists had disturbed the minds of his new converts by demanding that they conform to Jewish rites. And even in the council at Jerusalem "there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and

to command them to keep the law of Moses."[2]

But Peter championed the cause of the delegates from the mission fields, declaring that in spite of their resistance to Jewish rites, God gave "them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them."[3] And he eloquently demanded that no unbearable yoke be put upon them. And the council adopted a generous policy toward the new churches, and sent a commission to visit them and to explain the liberties granted. The preamble to the charter said, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." That is the secret of apostolic power. The decision of this great historic council settled for all time the international character of the Christian churches. And Judas and Silas, the prophets sent as the mssengers from Jerusalem, not only preached to the new Asiatic Christians but they "confirmed them." This and the Epistles of Paul settle forever the con-

[2] Acts 15. 5.
[3] Acts 15. 8-9.

nectional organization which united these scattered churches. The fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles is inspiringly interesting to all students of Christian polity.

Paul touched practically the entire Roman Empire, moving from one province to another, not merely preaching but gathering the new members into small groups for instruction, training, and mutual help. He definitely related the several groups to each other and to himself. In the history of the apostolic church we find that one of its greatest characteristics was the ability of the apostles to leave behind them an organization which gathered the new Christians together in classes. This made the church a power in every province. It was not only the truth preached, but this new organization that made early Christianity dominant. The members of Cæsar's household were converted. But suppose after conversion there had been no fellowship with any other Christians, and suppose there had been no connection with other Christian

groups. They would have vanished like water sucked up by desert sand. It would have been utterly impossible for them to live as individuals in the midst of heathen surroundings. But when a few of the members of Cæsar's household were not only converted, but organized into a class for Christian testimony and Christian conference, power was multiplied. Let them lay plans for the winning of their neighbors, and the situation is altogether different. It was this that undermined the very power of Cæsar and made the lowly Nazarene the conqueror of emperors. This is the history of successful missionary effort during the entire Christian era and throughout the world.

Methodism is founded on this Pauline system and breathes its spirit. Our apostles have pushed out everywhere with enviable enthusiasm, evangelistic fervor, and organizing efficiency. Wherever they have gone they have organized churches. Bishop William Taylor was a true Pauline Methodist. His brilliant prototype, Bishop James M. Thoburn, was in the true apostolic succes-

sion. With intrepidity, eloquence, prophetic vision, and continuous energy, he traveled throughout Asia, with Calcutta as the base of operations, covering the whole Peninsula of Hindustan, which is as large as the United States east of Saint Louis. He toured Burma, the Malay Peninsula, Borneo, Java, and the Philippine Islands, a territory—from Quetta to Manila — of about eight thousand miles. Everywhere he went, like Saint Paul and John Wesley and William Taylor, he left behind him organized churches. Two terms might aptly describe our history, namely, "evangelistic expansion" and "organized connectionalism."

In the Indian Empire alone we now have nine Annual Conferences, one Mission Conference, and one Mission. When the Lucknow group of early missionaries asked the General Conference to organize them into an Annual Conference there was considerable discussion, and not a little fear, but finally the General Conference granted permission to organize an India Annual Conference. A general superintending bishop

came to India for the express purpose of completing its organization and inspecting its work. That Conference is now one of the strong bodies of Methodism and its children are scattered over the whole land. The list of Indian Conferences in alphabetical order is Bengal, Bombay, Burma, Central Provinces, Gujarat, Indus River, Lucknow, North India, Northwest India, South India. They are regularly organized Conferences exactly as any Annual or Mission Conference in America, and with a relationship to the General Conference precisely the same.

Had it been intended that the church abroad should not be a part of our regular ecclesiastical organization, succeeding General Conferences would have made it perfectly clear. The fact that succeeding General Conferences have passed Enabling Acts encouraging and legalizing the Annual Conferences abroad, is proof positive and final that it has been the deliberate intention of the church to build up a world-wide organization.

What can be more fascinating than a study of our expansion? With what feeble strength our Missionary Society began its work a century ago, and with what magnificent evidence of material and spiritual power we have ended the century! In 1833 Melville Cox became our first foreign missionary and laid down his life in Africa, the blood of the martyr having been the seed of the church. Now in that continent our church is organized into Mission and Annual Conferences, with two resident general superintendents. In 1836 our pioneers entered South America, and, following the evangelistic impulse, our work in this field has grown until we have now several regularly organized Conferences, with a bishop in residence.

In 1849 returning Germans and other European emigrants who had been touched with evangelistic fervor in America, and had become members of the church, desired the establishment of Methodism in Europe. Thus the work began. Since then it has moved forward with remarkable power. In

1853 work was begun in Scandinavia; in 1856, in Switzerland; in 1857, Bulgaria; in 1871, Italy; in 1873, Mexico; 1883, Finland. The Board of Foreign Missions has followed the pillar of fire in Europe. This development has been absolutely indigenous, and these countries now have fully organized Annual Conferences with three resident bishops and a Central Conference for all Europe.

China was entered in 1847; Japan, 1882; and Korea, 1885. In Japan only the church has assumed a purely national character, having organized, in 1907, an independent Methodist Church in conjunction with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Canadian Methodist constituency in that country. In other parts of eastern Asia the church is organized exactly as it is in America, with general superintendents in residence on the field.

The India Mission was founded in 1856 by the Rev. William Butler, and has been a glorious chapter in our history. More than twenty-four years ago Bishop Foss de-

clared that no such growth had ever been seen in any mission field as he had beheld on his tour of observation in India. He said: "Let us take the statistics for the year 1887, the year of the last official visitation from this country before my tour, made by Bishop Ninde, and compare them with those of the year I was there, 1898. In 1887 we had 3,305 probationers; eleven years later, 46,097. In 1887 we had 4,018 full members; now we have 31,868. The total number of our communicants then was 7,323; now we have 77,963. That is an increase of *tenfold in eleven years.* . . . I especially ask if you can think of any figures beginning with thousands, where there has been such a percentage of increase in any mission, of which we have any knowledge, or in any part of any country where Methodism has ever been planted."

That was a quarter of a century ago. Today, the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and twenty-three, Methodism stands in the midst of an unprecedented opportunity in this land. Our theological college is unable

to accommodate all the applicants; our elementary schools, high schools, and colleges are crowded to the doors. Our church membership has reached 421,648 souls. Last year we baptized 35,340 persons. We have 6,120 Sunday schools with 200,000 scholars in regular attendance. We have 7,098 Epworth League chapters with 26,000 members. This year during our special revival months forty-three special meetings were held, with more than a million people in attendance. During these meetings there were 9,686 persons baptized. Bishop Thoburn's prophecy of a million Methodists in India is no longer considered a dream. Should the present ratio of increase continue during the next two decades (and there is every reason for believing that it will), his prophecy will have been realized and surpassed. Should the same ratio continue longer, and should I live to reach the age of Bishop Thoburn when he retired from active episcopal service in 1908, I shall have lived to see a Methodist Episcopal Church in India of more than a million and a half in its community.

God give us courage to remain true to this heavenly vision. This is the road of power and of service. We have but climbed the foothills which hid the supreme ranges from our sight, and the test of our loyalty is endurance to the glorious end.

CHAPTER V

THE INEVITABLE GOAL

All Christian missionary societies are coming rapidly to the conclusion that it is now imperative to adjust foreign-missionary administration so as to provide for the development of indigenous churches in the mission fields. Each church is now struggling with the problem of merging what is called "the Mission" with the indigenous church. Each denomination is, of course, approaching the problem from the standpoint of its own doctrine and polity, while at the same time interdenominational councils and committees in each mission field are attempting to find common and practicable lines of action.

This transition is essential from many standpoints, not the least of which is the variety of Christian expression and power which will come to the Church of Christ

when each race and nation has beheld the divine Son of God through its own eyes, and not through the eyes of another, and when Christian testimony can have the glow of the warm-hearted truth which only personal Christian experience gives. Nothing ever really belongs to us until we have made it our own. Every new Christian and every new church on the mission field must be able to say with convicting reality, "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking, for we have heard for ourselves and know." The real national Christian dynamic, for which all missionaries pray, will come to the new churches when they cease to feel dependence upon foreign methods, expressions, leaders, and resource, and step out with the sure sense of the personal possession of self-direction and conscious power.

There is one thing, however, which it would seem all Christian churches must guard against, and that is the danger of suddenly and drastically severing each national unit from the parent church. If this is done at all, it ought to be accomplished in

such a way as will keep each church in communion and fellowship with both the parent organization and with all other national Christian units. Ultimately, if Christianity becomes one universal communion, it will have been a great schooling and a great blessing to all national bodies to have had the experience of living with each other, and it would seem that unity could be brought about much more quickly by the cooperation of churches with world-wide affiliation and organization than by a collection of independent national groups.

There is something about pure nationalism which inevitably tends to division. Our patriotic loyalty is so deep-seated as to be practically an instinct. And this instinct is sometimes uncontrolled by reason. Who could ever bear a repetition of the terrible divisions of Christianity caused by the great World War? Most churches did not rise above national considerations. German preachers madly damned in public the kings and premiers of enemy nations; while British, French, Belgian, and American pulpits

often prostituted the sanctity of the ministry by publicly damning the enemies on the other side; and thousands of ministers prayed for the speedy and bitter destruction of their enemies. I kept a file of clippings from the newspapers at the time, in which these terrible words were printed. But a year ago, reading them over, I found that they so outraged my sense of Christian brotherhood that I destroyed them because I could not longer endure them even in my files. What we want is a world-embracing Christian fellowship and unity of spirit and brotherhood, which will help us to transcend national and racial prejudices even in hours of crises. Christianity is our one hope of universal good will, but its power is much more certain if it be a great world-wide fellowship. We could scarcely trust the efficiency of a Christianity which was confessedly and purposely broken up into strictly independent groups along national lines.

It is therefore wise seriously to consider the tendency toward purely national

churches. To reenforce this position, I take the liberty of inserting here that prophetic quotation which Mr. Hutchinson has given us from Bishop Bashford's address at the General Conference of 1912. It succinctly states my own conviction:

"The whole trend of modern history is toward world-wide affiliations. . . . The key to the twentieth century is internationalism as nationalism was of the nineteenth century. . . . It will be a thousand pities if at the very time when Christ's conception of a universal kingdom is beginning to capture the imagination of the world, Methodism, assembled in a General Conference, in which representatives of twenty nations sit side by side, should attempt to reverse the Divine Providence, abandon her birthright embodied in John Wesley's motto, 'The world is my parish,' and begin the organization of a national church for China, a national church for Mexico, a national church for Siberia."[1]

Obviously, this consciousness of being a

[1] Hutchinson, *The Next Step*, p. 12.

part of an ecumenical church need not exclude the sense of brotherhood with one's own national kin. Should great movements toward unity arise in any country—true indigenous movements, not those originated and fostered by foreign idealists—then it would be wise for the various groups related to the several branches to confer with each other and with the parent churches, with the hope of arriving at some plan by which the desired national unity could be achieved, and at the same time remain in fellowship and communion with the international churches.

Methodist Catholicity

Universality of organization and fellowship is possible without Pope or schism. Methodism has the middle road. There are four great international, connectional church bodies, Roman, Greek, Anglican, and Methodist Episcopal (including our sister Church South). The Church of Rome stands for one central autocracy, vested in the Bishop of Rome. The bishops in all

other countries are only his deputies. They have no power of independent action. The Church of England, and the churches in communion with her, while claiming to maintain the historical organization of the Christian Church, claim to go behind the papacy to the early Christian system, according to which the church in each country managed its own affairs, still maintaining communion with the churches in other countries. Eastern Orthodox Christianity earlier conceived and maintained practically the same system. During the Reformation the Church of England claimed that the church in each country ought to be free to manage its own affairs. The Episcopal churches in Scotland and Ireland were never under the jurisdiction of Canterbury, while similar churches in America, South Africa, and Australia became free constituent members of the Anglican family of churches.[2]

John Wesley began his career as a High Churchman, and only by slow degrees did

[2] See C. G. Pearson in the *Statesman*, Calcutta, August 11, 1923.

he depart from that position. He believed in the catholicity of the church and for many years, against innumerable odds, kept his United Societies in communion with the established church. But by long and scholarly research, together with holy living and a life of prayer, he came to realize that the historic episcopate was a myth, and that he and his spiritual children had a perfect right and obligation to assume their apostolic inheritance. He therefore claimed to go back beyond both Pope and episcopacy to the Pentecostal church and its presbyters.

He was a rigid disciplinarian, and the greatest religious scholar and organizer of his age. His rule was so complete and efficient that his preachers were likened to the Jesuits in loyalty and passion. Wesley's bold stroke in maintaining the episcopal form of church government as apostolic and efficient, while discarding the pretentious claim to unbroken succession, created a new ecclesiastical system destined to play a large part in catholic Christianity. This remarkable system may prove to be the ultimate

basis of Christian organic union. The Free Churchman has little difficulty about an episcopalian organization, however much his inherited prejudices might urge him toward pure congregationalism. But he does find it utterly impossible to smother his knowledge, experience, and convictions in order to accept restoration to a unity whose orders are admittedly dependent on a material rather than a spiritual basis, on a succession guaranteed by the imposition of human hands, and which denies the validity of the imposition of a Mightier hand.[3]

The Methodist Episcopal system claims, and has, all the advantages of an episcopal polity without a central Pope or archbishop, and without dependence upon mechanical orders. It has the essential elements of the ancient rituals of Christianity with the freedom of thought, expression, and growth necessary to true catholicity. Wesley's dictum, "We think and let think," is like that explosive expression of Oliver Cromwell in the Rump Parliament, "Gentlemen, by the

[3] See Bernard Lucas, *Our Task in India*, p. 113.

mercies of Jesus Christ, think it possible that you may be mistaken."[4] Wesley allowed the widest possible latitude of individual and group freedom of belief and expression.

In a free and adaptable organization like ours it is only necessary to maintain and adjust our historic policy in order to allow every country its own expression of Christianity, and yet remain in communion with and an organic part of the church as a whole. Let us conscientiously use the great polity bequeathed us by Wesley, adapting it with ever-increasing effectiveness to new times and new occasions.

Provision for National Churches

The General Conference of 1920 was an epoch-making Christian council because it saw the possibility of the Central or Regional Conference plan, and was bold enough to enlarge its scope so as to meet the exigencies of the present, and to anticipate the requirements of the future.

[4] Pearson, *Statesman*, Calcutta, August 11, 1923.

The powers of the Central Conferences, as outlined in paragraph 95 of the *Discipline,* are as follows:

"¶ 95, § 1. When in any of our foreign Mission fields there is more than one Annual Conference or Mission, if ordered by the General Conference, it shall be lawful to organize a Central Conference, to be composed either of all the members of those Annual Conferences or Missions, or of delegates from the same, elected according to such ratio as may be agreed upon between the constituent parties, who may also provide for the admission of laymen to such Conference, the number of lay delegates not to exceed that of the clerical delegates.

"§ 2. The first meeting of the Central Conference shall be called by the bishop in charge, at such time and place as he may select, to which all the members of the Conferences and Missions concerned shall be invited, and at which a ratio of representation shall be fixed by the Conference. The time and place of future meetings shall be determined by the Central Mission Conference;

provided, that it shall meet at least once in four years.

"§ 3. A general superintendent or a missionary bishop, if present, shall preside over a Central Mission Conference; but in his absence the Conference shall elect a president from among its own members. Missionary bishops have equal rights and privileges with general superintendents in the sessions of the Central Mission Conferences with which they are connected.

"§ 4. (1) To a Central Conference shall be committed for supervision the educational, industrial, publishing, medical, and other connectional interests of the Annual Conferences, Mission Conferences, and Missions within its jurisdiction; but never in contravention of the book of *Discipline,* or the orders of the General Conference; and it shall have no authority to involve the Board of Foreign Missions in any financial responsibility, nor to hold or control the property of the Board without the official permission of the said Board.

"(2) Subject to the approval of the bish-

ops, it shall have the power to arrange Courses of Study, including those in the vernaculars, for its ministry, both foreign and indigenous, including local preachers, exhorters, Bible women, deaconesses, teachers, both male and female, and all other workers whatsoever, ordained or lay.

"(3) In cooperation and collaboration with the Board of Foreign Missions and the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, it shall supervise the missionary work and policy of the indigenous church and provide suitable organization for such work.

"(4) A Central Conference is authorized to prepare and translate into the vernacular concerned simplified and adapted forms of such parts of the Ritual as may be deemed necessary; to extend Article XXIII of the Articles of Religion to recognize the government or the governments of countries within its jurisdiction.

"(5) A Central Conference shall have power to make such adaptations regarding membership, special advices, worship and the local ministry, not contrary to the Dis-

cipline, as the peculiar conditions of the fields concerned call for.

"(6) A Central Conference, where the laws of the country permit, and subject to proper agreements with the Board of Foreign Missions, shall have the power to incorporate an Executive Board or Committee with such membership and powers as may be determined by the Central Conference, for the purpose of transacting such necessary business as may arise in the interval between the sessions of the Central Conference, or that may be committed to it by the Central Conference.

"(7) A Central Conference shall have the power to establish detailed rules, rites, and ceremonies for the solemnization of marriage not contrary to the statute law of the country or countries within its jurisdiction.

"(8) A Central Conference shall have power to make such rules and regulations for the purchase, holding, and transferring of property, not related to the Board of Foreign Missions and the Woman's Foreign

Missionary Society, as the local laws allow or require.

"§ 5. In the Central Conference the right shall be reserved to vote by Conferences or Missions whenever the delegations from one third of the several Conferences or Missions represented shall so demand. In such cases the concurrent vote of the delegations from two thirds of all the Conferences and Missions present and voting shall be necessary to complete an action.

"§ 6. A Central Conference may fix the boundaries of the Annual Conferences within its bounds, proposals for changes first having been submitted to the Annual Conferences concerned as prescribed in ¶¶ 511-513, provided, however, that the number of Annual Conferences which may be organized within the bounds of a Central Conference shall first have been determined by the General Conference; and provided, further, that no Conference shall be organized with less than twenty-five members.

"§ 7. When a Central Conference has been duly organized it shall not be discon-

tinued except by order or consent of the General Conference.

"§ 8. The Journal of the proceedings of a Central Mission Conference, duly signed by the president and secretary, shall be sent for examination to the General Conference.

"§ 9. The Central Conference of Southern Asia and between sessions the Executive Board of the Central Conference, is authorized to fix the residences of the missionary bishops for Southern Asia, and to assign the missionary bishops to such residences."[5]

Central Conference Safeguards

I have presented the entire paragraph for the sake of clarity. Note the absolute safeguards against fantastic or unconsidered action on the part of any Central Conference.

1. A Central Conference can only be organized by the order of the General Conference (§ 1).

2. The Annual Conferences in the country concerned must vote to ask for and form such Central Conference (§ 1).

[5] *Discipline*, 1920, pp. 88-91.

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3. A bishop or a missionary bishop shall preside (§ 3).

4. It shall have no authority to involve the Board of Foreign Missions in any financial or other responsibility without the Board's consent (§ 4).

5. The Courses of Study must be approved by the bishop (§ 4).

6. It is to collaborate with the Board of Foreign Missions and the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society as to missionary policy (§ 4).

7. The number of Annual Conferences which can be organized within the bounds of a Central Conference must be determined by the General Conference (§ 6).

8. It can be discontinued only by the consent of the General Conference (§ 7).

9. Its Minutes are subject to examination by the General Conference (§ 8).

Who would ask for any more definite control, and who would label such strict legislation as unconsidered and sensational action? It is sensible, moderate, and wise. Nationals will probably sooner or later consider that

it errs on the side of being too conservative and will expect the revision of every restriction which may tend to limit national aspirations.

New Provisions Expected

The splendid advance made in 1920 must be followed up by the next General Conference with courage and statesmanship. New powers to these Central Conferences must be granted regularly, consistently, and generously. There is no more vital thing before our communion at this time. The last General Conference expected that further advance would be made along this line, as is evidenced by the following resolution, adopted after having been fully discussed in the Committee on Foreign Missions:

"*Whereas,* The Central Mission Conference has become a vital part of our foreign system of administration; and

"*Whereas,* There is considerable agitation in some countries concerning the subject of the increase of powers for Central Mission Conferences; therefore be it

"*Resolved,* That the General Conference request the appointment of a Commission on Central Conferences, which shall consist of the bishops in charge of foreign fields and nine others to be appointed by the Board of Bishops. The Commission is asked to study the whole question and report its recommendations to the next General Conference."[6]

This Commission is perhaps too large and its personnel too widely scattered, but it is at work and will have suggestions to make.

Future commissions might profitably be appointed with instructions to proceed as a body to each major field for purposes of study and report. On the membership of such committee there should be one representative from each Central Conference area and a small delegation from the great American section of the church. The cost of such sympathetic investigation would be infinitesimal compared to the advantage it would be to the Church of Christ throughout the world.

[6] General Conference *Journal,* 1920, p. 431.

The present plan has been slowly developed through a period of forty years. Undue haste is not expected. But we must act just as rapidly as conditions demand. We should see the need for change before being forced to yield. A true General Conference will be the precursor of progress, always a little in advance of necessities. And the constituencies within each Central Conference should take advantage of the liberties now given rather than to agitate for more power than they intend to use.

Special provision can be made for particular countries. Not all fields are in the same state of advance. The governmental, social, and religious conditions differ according to nationalities. It is not necessary to have a blanket provision applicable everywhere. The representation from each field should be studied independently. A backbone of general provisions is required, with particular legislation when and where necessary.

Within the immediate future certain proposals will require and deserve discussion. For instance, the election of bishops by the

Central Conferences. In certain of the countries the time has come for the consecration of one or more national bishops. How shall they be elected? As general superintendents, in the same manner as the two Negro bishops were elected in 1920, on a separate ballot? By the General Conference as missionary bishops according to present legislation? Or, shall the particular Central Conference be given an Enabling Act by the General Conference to elect a designated number of national bishops, fixing the nationality from which selection shall be made, and authorizing the bishops presiding at the Central Conference to consecrate them when elected? In the first two instances the machinery is ready to hand. If the last plan should appear, after discussion, to be preferable, the General Conference would need to set in motion the necessary legislation to make such elections possible. Considered from the angle of the development of an indigenous church this last method would be the most prophetic and constructive. The election of the required

number of national bishops does not need to affect any general superintendents who may also be assigned to residence in that field. During the transition period, the two types of bishops could be absolutely coordinate when administering in the field, and no friction nor confusion need develop. Ultimately all the bishops may be nationals. And meantime the national bishops need not be in any sense subject to general superintendents but coresponsible.

Provision should be made by which memorials could go direct to the General Conference from the Central Conferences, rather than having to pass through Annual Conferences, or through special signatures at General-Conference time. This would greatly simplify the manner in which the official expression of the desire of each particular field is secured. Other privileges will become obvious. At the present time, however, it is well to consider the machinery as adequate to imperative needs, and to press forward toward its utilization. On careful analysis it will be seen that the act provides

unusual facilities for national adaptation, expression, and growth.

Autonomy Guaranteed

Let us now consider in detail the remarkable powers already granted to each regularly organized Central Conference (¶ 95).

1. Each national unit determines for itself whether or not it shall have a Central Conference (§ 1).

2. Each Central Conference determines for itself the manner in which delegates will be elected, fixes the number of delegates, and determines the ratio of representation from the Annual Conferences (§ 1).

3. Laymen may compose one half the membership (§ 1).

4. It selects its own time and place of meeting during each quadrennium, and extra sessions may be convened, if required (§ 2).

5. In the absence of a bishop the Conference elects its own president from among its members, and elects all other officers (§ 3).

6. It has power to supervise:
   (*a*) All educational work within its territory.
   (*b*) All publishing interests, periodicals, books, literature, printing presses, and kindred concerns.
   (*c*) All medical and industrial missionary activities.
   (*d*) All general, connectional, ecclesiastical interests.

(§ 4, [1]). This is practically a blanket power-of-attorney to organize and conduct all work of an indigenous nature. It is extraordinary in its possibilities.

7. Power is given to adopt Courses of Study for the ministry, both foreign and indigenous (§ 4, [2]). This requires the approval of the bishops, but in America also the same approval is required.

8. It has authority to supervise the missionary work and policy of the indigenous church, and to determine the organization best suited to its success (§ 4, [3]). The cooperation of the Board of Foreign Missions and the Woman's Foreign Missionary

Society is required here. This is sensible so long as generous support comes from these two agencies. As the national church grows toward self-support, even this requirement will be removed.

9. Power is given to extend the twenty-third Article of Religion (which deals with loyalty to government) so as to recognize the government or governments of the countries within the Central Conference jurisdiction (§ 4, [4]). It would be difficult to find a parallel to this freedom in ecclesiastical organizations. Here is the supreme power to make the church national to the core. Patriotism and true national loyalty can here find full and high expression.

10. It has authority to adapt the requirements concerning membership, forms of worship, and the local ministry, to the peculiar needs of each field (§ 4, [5]). Here, again, each national unit may take full advantage of its liberty by making the church truly indigenous. If pulpits are un-Indian; if it would best appeal to Indians to leave their shoes outside the church, and

not to remove their turbans; if translated foreign hymns are uninspiring; if the conversational method of instruction and the silent method of worship are best adapted to the people of certain localities; if any other innovation would advance the kingdom of Christ—then let the Central Conference take the necessary action. Here is power unlimited, and true to the Christian principle of variety in method and unity in spirit.

11. Power is given to adjust the details, rules, rites, and ceremonies for the solemnization of marriage to national Christian custom, in conformity to the laws of the respective countries (§ 4, [7]).

12. Rules for holding and transferring property can be adopted by the Conference (§ 4, [8]).

13. Power is given to fix boundaries of the constituent Annual Conferences (§ 6).

14. The Southern Asia Central Conference is authorized to fix the residences of its missionary bishops (§ 9).

15. And in all these each constituent Annual Conference has its own suffrage and

power safeguarded, provision being made for separate vote on any measure. When such division is called for it requires two thirds of all the Conferences present and voting to complete an action (§ 5).

In this extraordinary list of powers it must be evident to any careful observer that most of the powers which a purely independent national church would grant to its central body are here provided for. When plans are made for the election of bishops the machinery will be practically complete for present requirements. I wonder whether our missionaries and national preachers and laymen realize what wonderful opportunity they have herein for the building of a true indigenous church! I trust the national churches in each area will speedily develop the vision, the disposition, and the courage to take advantage of these liberties.

Requisites for Indigenous Growth[1]

It must be kept constantly in mind that an indigenous church cannot be created by

[1] See Appendix B.

legislation, no matter how many technical powers are conferred upon the local constituencies by the supreme authority of any church. The roots must lie far deeper than this. The demand for autonomy and the ability to take over responsibility must go hand in hand.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in the foreign field is not a *Mission* in the technical sense in which this term is used by other Christian bodies. We are a *church,* with all the powers, privileges, rights, and opportunities for self-direction with which churches anywhere are endowed. The nature of our Annual Conference organization insures all members against individual or autocratic control. We have a considerable number of Indian district superintendents and heads of institutions. This number will increase. When receiving a recent class into membership in the Bengal Conference I was happy to be able to call their attention to the Disciplinary guarantee, namely, that they were now amenable only to the Annual Conference. No bishop, missionary, district

superintendent, or any other individual official could deprive them of position or suffrage. Any misunderstanding which might arise must be brought to the notice of the Conference through its regularly appointed committees, and the vote of the Conference is the authority. Even then there remains the right of appeal. They are now a part of a democratic world-wide organization, which grants to all its ministers, regardless of race or nationality, equal status and privileges.

In most of the Annual Conferences the nationals far outnumber those from other countries. Therefore if the full right of suffrage is used, there is every opportunity to mold the Indian Church or the Chinese Church into that form which may be best adapted to indigenous development.

Beyond the Annual Conference is the local Quarterly Conference with power to direct its own local affairs. Our laymen are not attached to a *Mission* from another country, but are actual members of *the Church of Christ,* fully organized and func-

tioning in their own country. No business man in America is any more truly a member of the church than is the humblest Indian or Chinese communicant. If this is clearly borne in mind by all administrators, both foreign and national, and by all preachers and members, we shall be able, with the present developing policy, to lay broad and deep the foundations of the national Christian churches.

Our 421,000 Methodist members in India and Burma are not under any necessity of denationalizing themselves in order to be loyal to the Methodist Episcopal Church in both doctrine and polity. Every missionary who comes to India or China joins a Conference, casting in his lot with the Indian or Chinese members. He subjects his ecclesiastical standing to their suffrage, and has no more and no less voting power than any other member.

The very genius of Methodism lends itself to the development of national churches, and we should direct our energies into those channels which will most speedily bring

about this desired end. We do not need to merge the Mission into the church. We are already merged. What we need is to live up to the privileges which are ours, and move forward boldly, courageously, and efficiently.

One danger that we missionaries must, however, guard against is that of seeking enlarged power for our Central Conferences so that *we* may have more chance to direct the destinies of the national church. This is a subtle temptation, because it can exist without our conscious knowledge. It can come as one of those subconscious ambitions born of a sincere desire to help. What we want is a Central Conference that will place upon the shoulders of the nationals themselves the opportunity, privilege, and responsibility of realizing their own national Christian ideals.

Having said this, it is necessary to confess that we, along with other missionary societies, have not always acted with consistent loyalty to the implications of our system or ideals. We have sometimes treated the na-

tional ministers or laymen as though they were inferiors. We have brought our own etiquette with us and have sometimes ignorantly demanded that the nationals conform to our standards rather than to take the trouble to learn their customs and to respect them. Why should we forever demand that every foreigner who comes to America should speedily *Americanize* himself, but forget to *Indianize* ourselves when we come to their country? Are these hard words? I apply them to myself. I am sure that in more than one instance I have ignorantly and unconsciously outraged the sensibilities of lovely Indians by my crass Occidental manner. God give us the vision, humility, and self-forgetfulness that will help us to identify our lives with these nascent, national Christian churches.

We are only at the beginning of the Christian victories which await us in these lands. We have but one supreme task. That is to inspire, instruct, and transfer as rapidly as possible. There may be always foreign ministers in our indigenous Conferences, just

as there are foreign ministers in our American Conferences, but they must be there to help and to cooperate with a self-contained church and not to necessarily direct it in general or particular affairs.

The church in the mission field must of necessity become more natural to the soil in which its life is to be lived. In many ways it has often presented to its non-Christian neighbors the spectacle of an exotic growth, not native to the country, but foreign, and therefore undesirable. Considering the fact that the knowledge of Christianity was brought to these countries by foreign missionaries and that the methods of these men and women seemed to the new Christians the only way to do things, the development of a church copied after the Occidental type was perhaps inevitable in the early years. But the time has now come to change the form, the method, and the emphasis. The Christian churches must identify themselves with their own country. They must share its burden, help mold its policies, and assist in building its national structure.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROAD OF THE BURNING HEART

"Jesus himself went with them."

WHO has been our companion and guide? Who brought us up hither? These vital questions face us as we journey toward the goal set before us. When John Wesley at Aldersgate met Jesus Christ face to face and entered into the great spiritual experience which set his life aglow with divine fervor and irresistible power, he exclaimed that his heart was strangely warmed within him.

His was not an isolated experience. Centuries before, on that historic road to Emmaus, two disciples walked beside a strange and fascinating Traveler. They had experienced great events during recent months. At the call of a high vision they had left everything they possessed and had followed

a man named Jesus. They had thought him to be the Messiah. They had sacrificed for him and had suffered persecution and hardship and toil. Yet their lives were glorified by the mere joy of fellowship with him. They had been with him by the sea, in the country, on the mount, in humble homes, beside the market place, and in the synagogue. They had risked everything for him, had staked all on his cause. Three days before he had been attacked by a cruel mob, and the sober judges had condemned him. All the legal authorities—the Pharisees and the scribes and the lawyers—had declared him the enemy of the state and the church. Therefore they had dragged him to a public gibbet and had crucified him.

What could his followers now do but go back to the old home and the old life? Maybe they had been mistaken anyhow. The high moments were forgotten. The visions were gone. The reaction had set in. That is always a deadly moment when the reaction and the doubt come after the high, holy hours of vision. The heart suffers one

of two serious breakdowns. It is either dead with disappointment or so bitter as to condemn the former glory and to try to cast it out of the memory. The mind argues against it and declares that the moments of inspiration were unreal—things were carried too far; words of adoration were spoken in extravagance; it was all a huge blunder; it was good that one had discovered the illusion in time. The easy, steady, dead-level life is better after all. Oh, let us confess it! We have all had these moments of reaction. These men were *going back* to the low roof, the narrow street, the mud wall, the oil wick, and the common village.

But while they walked this Stranger joined them. And when they arrived at their little, smoky village they asked him to abide awhile. And when he began breaking the bread, their breath suddenly failed them. Each, instantaneously, looked at the other. Something caught in their throats. They saw him smile and vanish from their eager sight. Oh, wonder of wonders, it was Jesus! It was their beloved Messiah! He was alive

and they knew it not! Then their blinded eyes were opened, and the old high visions came back. They caught each other in their arms, and cried one to another, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?"

And they ran back along that road of the burning heart to Jerusalem, and rushed up to the disciples' meeting place, crying warmly and earnestly that Jesus was alive and that they had seen him—yes, they had seen him, walked with him, ate with him! He was alive; they had experienced it. And while they spoke Jesus himself suddenly stood in the midst of them. There were his sorrow-pierced hands, and feet, and side. Now all the visions returned. They knew then that these moments were the great rich realities of life. What were doubts and reactions now?

And in this present high moment of renewed vision he gave them the great commission—"Go," he said, "and preach in my name *among all nations* (beginning at Jerusalem), the remission of sins, the sufferings

and death of Christ, and his resurrection from the dead. You are witnesses of these things, and I will send the Holy Spirit upon you, and you shall be endued with power from on high." And again, in glory, he vanished out of their sight. But never again did the vision fade. They went out with great joy, praising God and carrying his blessed story to men with beholden eyes.

From that day to this Jesus has walked with his millions of awakened disciples along the road of the burning heart.

This is the way the Methodist Episcopal Church came to develop our vast and unselfish program of world-wide ministry and service. *He has been our Guide.*

Does anyone imagine that he was not present at all the General Conferences throughout the years where these policies have been adopted with enthusiasm and vision? One stands amazed at the temerity of lawyers who could look upon that scene at Des Moines, when our two beloved Negro bishops were elected, and then walk along some dusty Emmaus road of reaction, indiffer-

ence, and cold-blooded calculation, and declare it illegal. I shall never forget that applause; shall never forget the way the delegates leaped to their feet, and stood to honor these dark-skinned sons of God as they were escorted to the platform. I saw my white-haired seniors clasp them in their arms. My heart burned within me. And one of the silver-haired saints said to me with a glow in his cheek, "Oh, son, I have waited thirty years to see this sight." Who shall say it was done in sudden frenzy? For a half dozen quadrenniums we have been voting for colored men for this office. At last the General Conference of 1920 had the courage to adopt a legal method of voting which would guarantee an election.

And I shall not forget those turbaned Indians, silk-clad Chinese, and dark-skinned Africans—and a dozen other nationalities, who rejoiced in the enlargement of plans for national Central Conferences. Their eyes were opened, that they might behold each nation rising in native strength to worship the Man of the Emmaus Road and of the

nail-pierced hands. We shall not forget those hours. They were vital realities. And no matter if it is hard to put all the plans into practice, we shall not be disobedient to the heavenly vision.

"Not mine to wet the page of yesterday
With unavailing tears;
Nor strive to clear the mystery of a way
Far, leading through the years."

Enough that He said "Go." Enough that He stood in our midst. Enough that He walks with us in the way.

The historian's failure is that he looks ever backward. He thinks everything that *can* happen *has* happened. That all that yet comes must merely repeat what has gone before. Herein he misses the goal. It is perfectly legitimate to turn the light of the past upon the future, but folly to deliberately darken the future by the shadows of the past. The church is not dead, so its biography cannot yet be completed. We must conceive of it as an *unfinished* history, and we must seek to discover the next chap-

ter in its progressive life. We are still writing it, and the authors must not be in too great hurry to get to the end. Patience and expectation are required. Not backward, but forward; not legal formalism but life. The living Christ walks with us in this modern world and we must not stumble with eyes beholden and see him not. Thomas Curtis Clark has given us the challenge in his lines on "The Faith of Christ's Freemen":[1]

"Our faith is not in dead saints' bones,
In altars of vain sacrifice;
Nor is it in the stately stones
That rise in beauty toward the skies.

"Our faith is in the Christ who walks
With men to-day, in street and mart;
The constant Friend who thinks and talks
With those who seek him with the heart.

"His gospel calls for living men,
With singing blood and minds alert;
Strong men, who fall to rise again,
Who strive and bleed, with courage girt.

[1] From *Love Off to the War*, James F. White & Co., publishers. Used by permission.

"We serve no God whose work is done,
Who rests within his firmament:
Our God, his labors but begun,
Toils evermore, with power unspent.

"God was, and is, and e'er shall be;
Christ lived and loved—and loves us still;
And man goes forward, proud and free,
God's present purpose to fulfill."

The Road of the Burning Heart is the Road of the Living Presence of Christ. When the awakened disciples rushed back along that road to the meeting place of the church council, they had a vital Christian experience which they were anxious to impart to others. When they reached the council room and burst into testimony, Jesus stood in the midst of them. He was present both on the road and in the council. And we must never forget that when the missionaries and Indians, and Chinese, and Africans, and other redeemed personalities came back along the Road of the Burning Heart to the General Conference, to tell what the living Christ had wrought throughout the earth, Jesus himself stood in our midst. No

man dare take away from the church the faith that our councils are led by the living Christ in the hearts of his representatives. To label them as deceived violators of the law is to take away the charter of apostleship from every officer elected, and the stamp of Pentecost from every plan adopted. This does not mean infallibility. There may be defects in the plans, and human weaknesses in the personalities, but the general motives and principles are sound and true and right.

In reading a passage from Thomas W. Higginson an admirer was inspired to say, "The best of history is not machine made, but is inspired by high ideals, and is purposive with the lofty aims of God." This is the only kind of historic interpretation which the soul can trust and follow.

"This is the way, walk ye in it."
"And lo! I am with you, even unto the end."

APPENDIX A

ARE THERE TOO MANY BISHOPS?

Much has been said and written of late concerning the alleged illegality, extravagance, prodigality, or excessive enthusiasm with which the General Conference of 1920 scattered a largely increased number of bishops throughout the earth. As a matter of fact, I have not seen one accurate statement concerning the actual number of new residences created. Advantage has been taken of the technical fact that the missionary bishops were not general superintendents. It is only in this way that the number of new bishops elected can be stated as seventeen. For the sake of accuracy one must take into account the three missionary bishops who were elected general superintendents, and the general superintendents and missionary bishops who had died during

the previous quadrennium. Taking this into account the actual increase in episcopal residences abroad was only six—one in China, one in Malaysia, one in India, two in Europe, and one in Mexico. Much of the discussion has been so sensational as to lead the public to think that the entire seventeen residences abroad were a brand-new idea, when, as a matter of fact, the increase has simply been in line with normal expansion. The accident that the number of residences abroad coincided with the total number of new bishops has also led to confusion.

Referring to the General Conference *Journals,* it is easy to find more radical increases in the past. Take, for instance, the General Conference of 1872. There were eight new bishops elected at that time. Considering the size of the church, the temper of the times, and the conditions of the world, that increase was more extravagant than that of the recent General Conference. So far as policy is concerned the election of William Taylor as missionary bishop and the launching of that policy was sensational

in its effect. And certain General Conferences have elected unordained laymen to the episcopacy and have had to ordain them deacon, elder and bishop within a few hours. In 1900 the missionary episcopacy in Southern Asia was suddenly increased threefold. In 1904 we elected seven new bishops and four missionary bishops, an increase for that day more radical than the increase of 1920. If one seeks unusual procedure, he can find plenty of it in Methodist history and especially in the *Journals* of our deliberative bodies. This is one of our glories—the ability to move quickly, and to meet unprecedented conditions in unprecedented ways.

The two things which made the action of 1920 extraordinary were, first, the election of the three missionary bishops to the general superintendency, and, second, the election of the two Negro bishops. Both these actions had been long considered and debated by previous General Conferences. They were not new issues. These two things, plus the increase in the number of foreign residences, plus the fact that no

missionary bishops were elected, plus the enlarged powers conferred upon Central Conferences, explain the present conservative reaction to what seemed to be an unusual expansion. Taken separately, no single action was either illegal or sensational. It is only when they are put together that they alarm timid souls. But taken collectively they are not at all radical in view of the times in which we live and the new conditions facing our church.

It must be kept in mind that there were three bishops in Southern Asia as long ago as 1900. The creation of two new episcopal residences in the vast territory from Quetta to Manila is not an extravagance when one considers that the General Conference of twenty years before considered it necessary to have three. During these twenty years Methodism has grown by leaps and bounds in Southern and Southeastern Asia. In 1900 there were a hundred and twenty thousand members in this territory; to-day approximately a half million!

Can it be possible that with the unprece-

dented growth of our constituency, and the complexity of the administrative problems, the sober-minded people of our church can believe that four bishops are too many for India? Consider the distance the administrators must travel. As an example, the two sections of my own area are separated by eight hundred miles of sea. Three days on a mail steamer are required to get from Calcutta to Rangoon. If one takes the entire stretch of the area from east to west, the territorial extent (in point of time required to traverse it) is equal to the distance from Boston, Massachusetts, to Denver, Colorado. Consider the number of episcopal residences which lie within this territory in America. It is not claimed that the work of the resident bishop in Calcutta is commensurate with the work of all these bishops. The comparison is made in order to show that in point of travel and the inconvenience of administration the work is almost an impossibility. How our bishops resident abroad during the last half century have been able to maintain their health and life

is more than I am able to explain. The difficulties of travel, the complexity of the problems, the burden of the finances, the poverty of the people, their sorrows, their needs, sap the strength and power of the strongest body and mind.

When I read these intermittent articles in the church press demanding the withdrawal of two of the four bishops from Southern Asia and implying that two would be sufficient to handle the work, I am tempted to request the church to offer the authors of these articles an opportunity to try the administration. One year would cure them. That is if they had any missionary vision; if they had a heart; if they were interested in the problems and the opportunities of work of this character. Of course, if they came with a local American consciousness, and saw everything through the eyes of "Main Street" and "Upham's Corners," they might not be conscious of the challenges and opportunities that lie upon every hand. In that case they might think that there is not enough to do. But did anyone ever hear

Francis Asbury or William McKendree speak in these terms of their pioneer tasks? Was their full time required in the mere ordination of ministers and the holding of Annual Conferences? They were itinerants, constantly on the road; they were praying in private houses, preaching the gospel in inns, holding evangelistic meetings, dedicating new chapels and meetinghouses, encouraging isolated preachers in the heart of the wilderness, weaving together in common idealism the far-scattered churches. That is our task on the foreign frontier.

One reason that we do not catch the vision of the opportunity of the episcopacy abroad is because we are thinking of a sort of overhead episcopate, whose particular business is to preside in Annual Conferences, ordain the candidates to the ministry, deliver Annual Conference sermons and lecture to thousands of people. But this is a picture that does not seem to obtain either in America or abroad. Sitting in the meetings of the Board of Bishops and listening to the reports of my colleagues, I have become im-

pressed with the hard work which the men are doing in all the areas, whether it be in New England, the Middle West, the Pacific Coast, or at the outposts of civilization.

Sometimes when I have read certain critical articles, I have laid down the papers and have asked myself the question, "What am I here for?" Am I here because we are supposed to have a well-established Methodist Episcopal Church, with well-oiled machinery and every department moving, and because a bishop is required simply to preside and to sit in the seat of the mighty? Or, am I here because the church has set me down in the midst of a vast and seething population, with broken hearts, with diseased bodies, with blind eyes, in the hovels of poverty; needing education, needing inspiration, needing economic relief, needing the vision of Jesus Christ? I am here because there is widespread *opportunity.* I am here not because Methodism has already become great, I am here to establish it if possible, and to make it great in the service of the kingdom of God. If I can do that, then there is some

reason for the church having sent me to the ends of the earth. If I cannot catch that vision and do not feel the throb of that call, then I ought to resign, and seek a more congenial place of service.

It was made perfectly plain, both by the representatives of the Committee on Episcopacy and by the General Conference as a whole, that whatever bishops were elected in 1920 must be prepared to be assigned to residences abroad, to be separated from the home land, and to live under foreign conditions. Therefore every man, myself among them, who accepted the election of that General Conference, and permitted our episcopal seniors to lay their hands upon our heads in consecration to this task, must steadfastly, earnestly, and devotedly follow the gleam and fulfill our trust. If any of us have failed, then let the ensuing General Conference suggest that we either resign or retire. If some of us are unhappy, let us attempt to find happiness not so much in changing the geographical environment in which we are living as by changing the inner vision of our

hearts. But I do not believe that the demand to withdraw the men from abroad has been inspired by the men in these fields. Is it not rather a misunderstanding on the part of certain minds in the church as to what the episcopacy is supposed to do abroad and as to the genius of our international expansion?

I sincerely trust there will be no serious or permanent reaction to the advance policies adopted by the General Conference of 1920. The election of a certain number of particular men to the episcopacy and their assignment to certain residences abroad is a mere incident in the general plan. The General Conference of 1920 met at a time when great living streams, long hidden, began to break forth through the surface, and the delegates had that sort of prescience which enabled them to see the signs of the times, and to reach decisions calculated not only to affect the events of their own day but also of future generations. It is to be hoped that no agitation will put fear into our hearts nor cause us to look back, now that we have

courageously crossed the Red Sea. The promised land lies ahead, not back among the flesh pots.

Personally, I am of opinion that Dr. David G. Downey and the Committee on Episcopacy acted in the manner of modern Christian statesmen. I have watched General Conferences for five quadrenniums, and I have never seen policies adopted with more steady devotion to the task in hand, nor with more freedom from haste or confusion. Anyone who attended the General Conference of 1920 must have been conscious of the undercurrent of spiritual power which lifted the delegates like a rising tide.

Let it not be said that the failure to realize the full expectation of Centenary finances should cause us to think that we have made gigantic blunders and have been stampeded into an advance for which we are unprepared. Money is useful, but it is not the only thing required for the advancement of the Kingdom. Leadership is often more essential where there is *no* money than where there is *abundance*. The policies adopted by

the General Conference of 1920 can all be separated from any consideration whatever of the Centenary finances, and justify themselves purely on their own merits. Particularly is this true with reference to international decisions, such as the provision for the careful, but progressive, enlargement of the powers of the Central Conferences.

Why speak of the burden of expense in connection with episcopal supervision? There are in the whole church, in America and throughout the world, only thirty-seven effective bishops. These are the elected administrators for more than four millions of actual members and several more millions of constituents. These thirty-seven men, for all salaries, house rents, office rents, administrative expenses, cables, postage, printing, and travel, cost an average of approximately $9,300 a year. What kind of financial calculation could possibly imagine that this is a heavy burden for our millions of members? Many local pastors and heads of local institutions have larger salaries and more liberal allowances. To complain of a light bur-

den of this character would be like impatiently pulling out one hair to relieve its excessive weight on one's head.

The agitation with reference to the withdrawal of bishops from abroad, and the worry over the number of effective bishops now at work, leads one to wonder whether we really are an Episcopal Church. You do not find the other episcopal denominations acting in this manner. Recently the Protestant Episcopal Church in one diocese elected a bishop coadjutor. There was already a suffragan bishop. There are, therefore, now in this one diocese three bishops of that church. A friend of mine, who is a member of that communion, has given me an estimated cost of diocesan administration as $65,000 for this one diocese and he says there is not a whisper of dissatisfaction, and that diocese includes only one half of one State. Furthermore, the Protestant Episcopal Church is by no means the strongest church in that section. This communion, with one fourth our membership, has within the territory of the United States of America some-

thing like seventy bishops. Our Methodist Episcopal Church has thirty-seven for the whole world. Nor do you find the Anglican Church, the Greek Church, or the Roman Catholic Church drastically limiting the number of episcopal administrators. They really believe in the episcopal form of church government and use it as an asset.

We profess to believe that the episcopal form is an apostolic method of church government. Then why not use it in the way the apostles did?

It is possible that we might find it to our great advantage in America to have a bishop for practically each State in the Union, with perhaps two in such States as New York and Ohio, with residences at New York, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Cincinnati. The residences might well be at the capital city of the State. The Annual Conference territories could be so readjusted as to conform, where practicable, to State lines. Under this plan there might be fewer district superintendents in some Conferences, but this would not be an essential element.

Furthermore, it is not at all certain but that in addition to the seventeen residences abroad there might not be profitably added a few new residences, such as Alaska. Think of the future of that empire, and what an itinerant pioneer bishop of the Asbury or McKendree type could do in that partially settled, but growing, modern American development. Other strategic centers might be Panama, the West Coast of South America, Honolulu, West China, Rangoon, Delhi, North Africa, and Rome. A paragraph might easily be written, setting forth the advantages of each of these localities and others.

It does not necessarily mean that all the bishops would have to be chosen from America. Consider the nationalities and the birthplaces of our bishops. Most of them, of course, have been and now are native citizens of the United States of America, but among those born in Great Britain were Coke, Asbury, Whatcoat, Thomson, McIntyre, Burt, and Johnson. Four were born in Canada, namely, Fowler, Berry,

Nicholson, and Warne. The last named has always been a citizen of the British Empire. One, J. E. Robinson, was born in Ireland. One, Anton Bast, was born in Denmark and continues to be a citizen of that country. One, Nuelsen, is a native of Switzerland. One, Richardson, is a native of the West Indies. And one, Oldham, was born in India. There is no reason why we should not select the most capable and spiritually minded men available anywhere in our church, regardless of nationality.

If any such plan of extension were adopted, it would need to be done, of course, in the spirit of the early church, touched by the modern vision. The work of such bishops would not be merely to conserve the established work, but to develop indigenous, self-supporting, self-propagating churches in the mission fields of the world.

The growth of the Central-Conference plan will give us national church units in the several racial, language, and national groups. It must not be overlooked that one significant advantage of the episcopal plan

of church government is the position occupied by a bishop in practically every country of the world. There is a social, a political, and a religious value in the episcopal system which we as a church have failed to appreciate and utilize. Only those conversant with the life in cosmopolitan centers throughout the world can appreciate the worth of an episcopal residence in great ports and commercial centers.

A company of American travelers recently attended services at our Thoburn Church in Calcutta. Among them was a very prominent representative of another denomination. With enthusiasm he spoke to me of his pleasure in having found our English-speaking churches at Manila, Singapore, Penang, Rangoon, and Calcutta. His admiration for a church with such world-wide interests was manifest. A gentleman, standing by his side, mentioned his having worshiped for several years at our church in Buenos Ayres. In a conspicuous and serviceable way we could make our message known to mankind by maintaining ef-

fective episcopal headquarters at the strategic crossroads of the world; not pushing in where other Christian forces are adequately caring for the work, but accompanying the natural human expansions, exactly as our pioneer itinerants did in the American West. Saint Paul followed the Mediterranean trade routes and human migrations, establishing his ruling churches in the provincial centers of the empire.

I am not urging the adoption of the above plan, nor would I wish this passing suggestion to be taken as an evidence of radicalism. It is merely an incidental attempt to call attention to the possibility of a greater utilization of our episcopal form of church government.

One point that has not been presented in any of the current articles is the fact that a bishop in a church like ours is often more necessary in a pioneer field than in a well-established section. In the latter there are effective district superintendents constantly administering; there are successful pastors, efficient and prosperous laymen, presidents

of colleges, and a score of other leaders in every walk of life, who carry on with little or no supervision. In remote places, however, daring and responsible leadership is required in all sorts of crises. Consider how paternal was Asbury in the pioneer days. Practically every decision rested finally with him and his associates. But now many of the great institutions are self-managed, and give the bishop little concern. They are co-operating allies and supporters of the general administration.

With reference to the number of bishops in other countries than the United States it is a question as to whether their areas should be so extensive and their labors so strenuous as to make it impossible for them to be mediums between the church in America and the churches abroad. During the present generation the major support of missionary effort will continue to come from the American churches, and the bishops in many instances would be the most authoritative source of information and inspiration for the missionary message. To illustrate: the re-

cent meeting of the bishops decided that, in view of the situation, they would request Bishop Birney to return from China for a few months because the church had been deprived of the Chinese message during the quadrennium, and because it was believed that the situation there, properly portrayed, would lead the church to enlarged support. A cable was sent to Bishop Birney requesting his service. But it was impossible for him to accede to the request because the death of Bishop Lewis had placed upon the shoulders of two bishops the entire Chinese administration. It was utterly impossible to care for the Conferences except by strict adherence to residential supervision. Is this good business administration? Might not Bishop Birney's compelling message, at the right hour, have been worth more than the cost of the support of two or three bishops for China during the quadrennium?

This sketchy presentation is placed in the appendix because it is not an essential part of the general argument of this volume. We have administrative officers in addition to

bishops, and our Boards are vast in their enterprise. We have also an inherent initiative on the part of district superintendents, pastors, evangelists, local preachers and laymen which carries us constantly forward. Maybe we pay too much attention to bishops anyhow—however, *audi alteram partem.*

APPENDIX B

THE INDIAN CHURCH MEASURE

Along with other Christian forces the Church of England, in India, has attempted to adjust itself to the new conditions on the foreign mission field. As an established church certain limitations are recognized. The limitations are twofold, governmental and ecclesiastical.

In 1920 the bishops in their Episcopal Synod, after consultation with ecclesiastical lawyers both in England and in India, drew up a suggested Bill for presentation to the government with a view to readjusting the charter of the church, so that the Indian constituency might become independent of Canterbury in matters of national policy, while remaining in full fellowship with the church as a whole. This bill was expected to establish a synodical church government on provincial lines. In explaining the provisions of the proposed Constitution the

Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India has suggested five points: (1) to authorize for use forms of service, and as required revise the same and draft additional forms; (2) to frame canons and rules of discipline; (3) to constitute new dioceses and determine their boundaries; (4) to elect and consecrate new bishops; (5) to institute church courts for the trial of ecclesiastical offenses.

It will be recognized that certain of these privileges are already granted to Central Conferences by the Methodist Episcopal Church, while certain others are in line with the provisions now asked for by certain Methodist constituencies.

The proposed Anglican amendment to the Constitution is now before the government in the form of a Bill presented to the National Assembly. There is widespread discussion of the measure. The public press is full of letters on both sides of the controversy. Certain English members of the church are demanding that there be no change whatever, while Indians and the

broader spirits among the English members of the church are demanding that some such measure be adopted both by the government and by the church.

In discussing the proposal the Bishop of Calcutta has written the following illuminating paragraphs:

"By adopting a Constitution for the church in the Province we are not constituting a new church. There is but the one Holy Catholic Church. It may be rent asunder, but the Church of England has always held the Catholic faith and maintained Catholic order. At the time of the Reformation, to borrow a well-known simile, the members of the Catholic Church in England felt that the face of the church had become somewhat disfigured by dirt, and determined to wash it. . . . Some will think that they scrubbed the church's face too hard, and rubbed off more than the dirt; others may think that some of the dirt was left; but the main point is that you do not change your identity by washing your face, which it is wholly within your right to do.

APPENDIX B

"In accordance with its inherent power the Church of England has from time to time issued determinations on matters of faith, and has authorized forms of worship and promulgated canons; but it has not established a new church in so doing. . . . So it is with the members of the church in communion with the Church of England in India; if, so far, they have conformed to the practice of the Church of England in all matters concerning their secondary formularies of faith, discipline, and worship, and now are convinced that in the interests of their life and work they need to modify some of these in their own way, while adhering in all essentials to the great Catholic tradition, they do not lose their identity by so doing; they do not become something which they were not before, but they take a step forward in the path of self-realization."[1]

South India United Church

In this connection it is interesting to note that the proposed enlargement of the con-

[1] *The Statesman*, Calcutta, September 1, 1923.

stituencies within the United Church of South India provides that the entire church be in communion with all present Christian bodies. The purpose is to form an indigenous church in full communion and fellowship with all those churches which brought the light of the gospel of Christ to India. It is not proposed to create a separate national institution without international affiliation and unity.

These two illustrations with reference to the Anglican Church Measure in India and the United Church of South India, are referred to for the purpose of further explaining the author's thesis in this volume, namely, that the Methodist Episcopal Church must give itself in this day to the development of its international polity along such lines as will keep all our Christians in fellowship and communion, and, if possible, in organic unity, with the mother church, and at the same time make possible its fellowship, communion, and unity with other indigenous bodies in the various nations. Just how this can be done by Methodism

and by other communions the author is not now able to predict. But he pleads for the continuation of organic Methodism as an international Christian body as the best step toward the realization of the ultimate ideal. We have no governmental establishment or connection, or limitation which ties our hands in any way, and it would be a shame to let mere tradition in nonessentials, such as methods of transacting our business, keep us from rendering the widest possible international service.

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